

# **Infrastructure and Service Improvement Plan for the Emergency Shelter System**

Community Development and Recreation Committee

March 23, 2015

# Context

- Strategic Direction #8 in *2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Planning Framework*
  - continue to maintain a strong emergency shelter system
- *Housing First* approach to ending homelessness
  - While providing a robust, responsive capacity to assist people in crisis
- Support the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy

# Shelter system overview

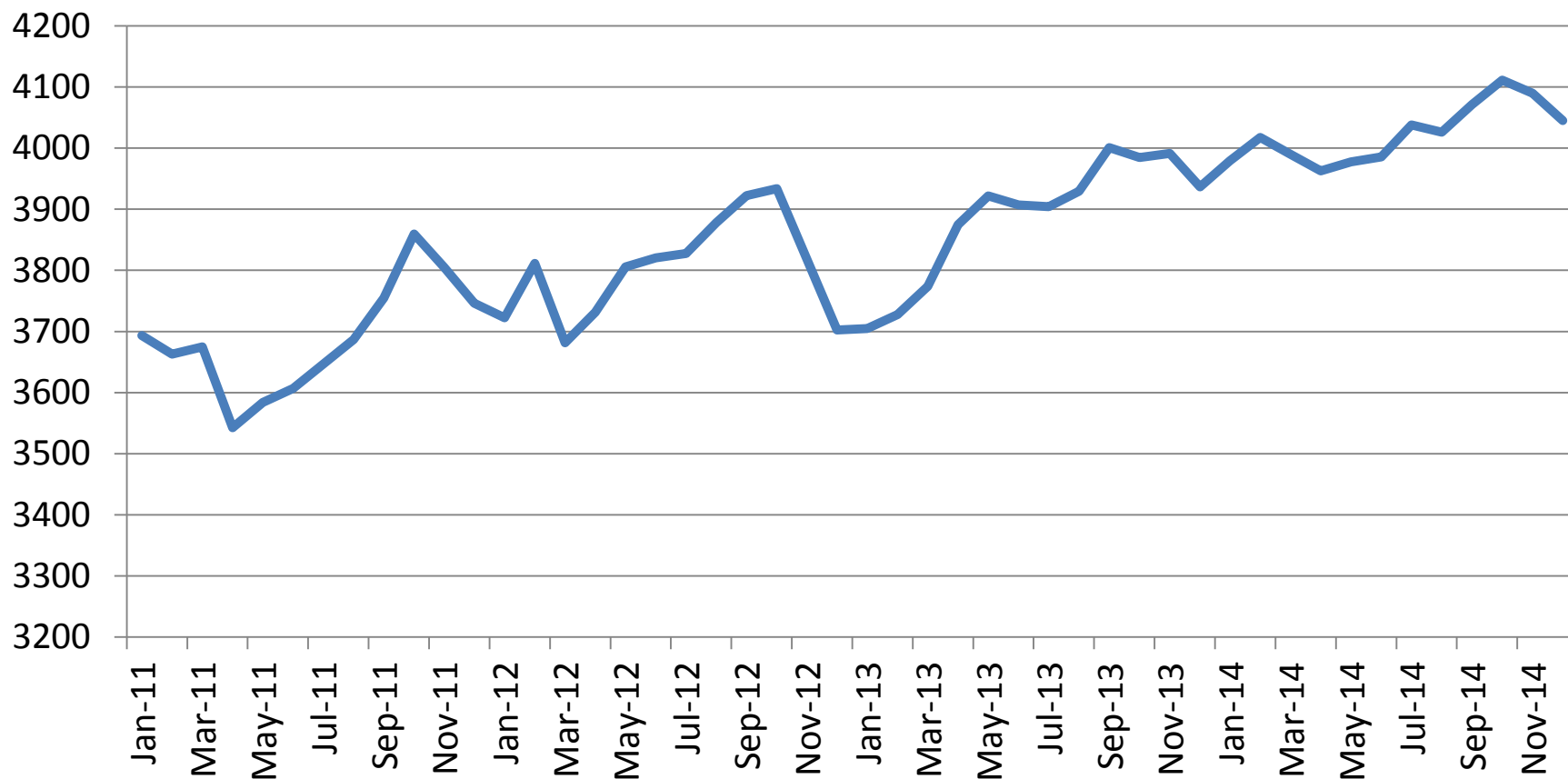
- 4,476 full-time beds
  - 3,395 emergency shelter beds (76%)
  - 1,081 transitional shelter beds (24%)
- 59 shelter sites across the city
  - 10 directly operated
  - 49 operated through purchase of service contracts with community providers (68% of beds)

# Shelter system overview

- In 2014
  - more than 16,000 unique individuals used the shelter system
  - each shelter bed was used, on average, by almost 4 different people
  - 64% of shelter users were male, 35% female and 1% transgender
  - 69% were adults, 19% were youth (aged 16 to 24) and 19% were children under 16

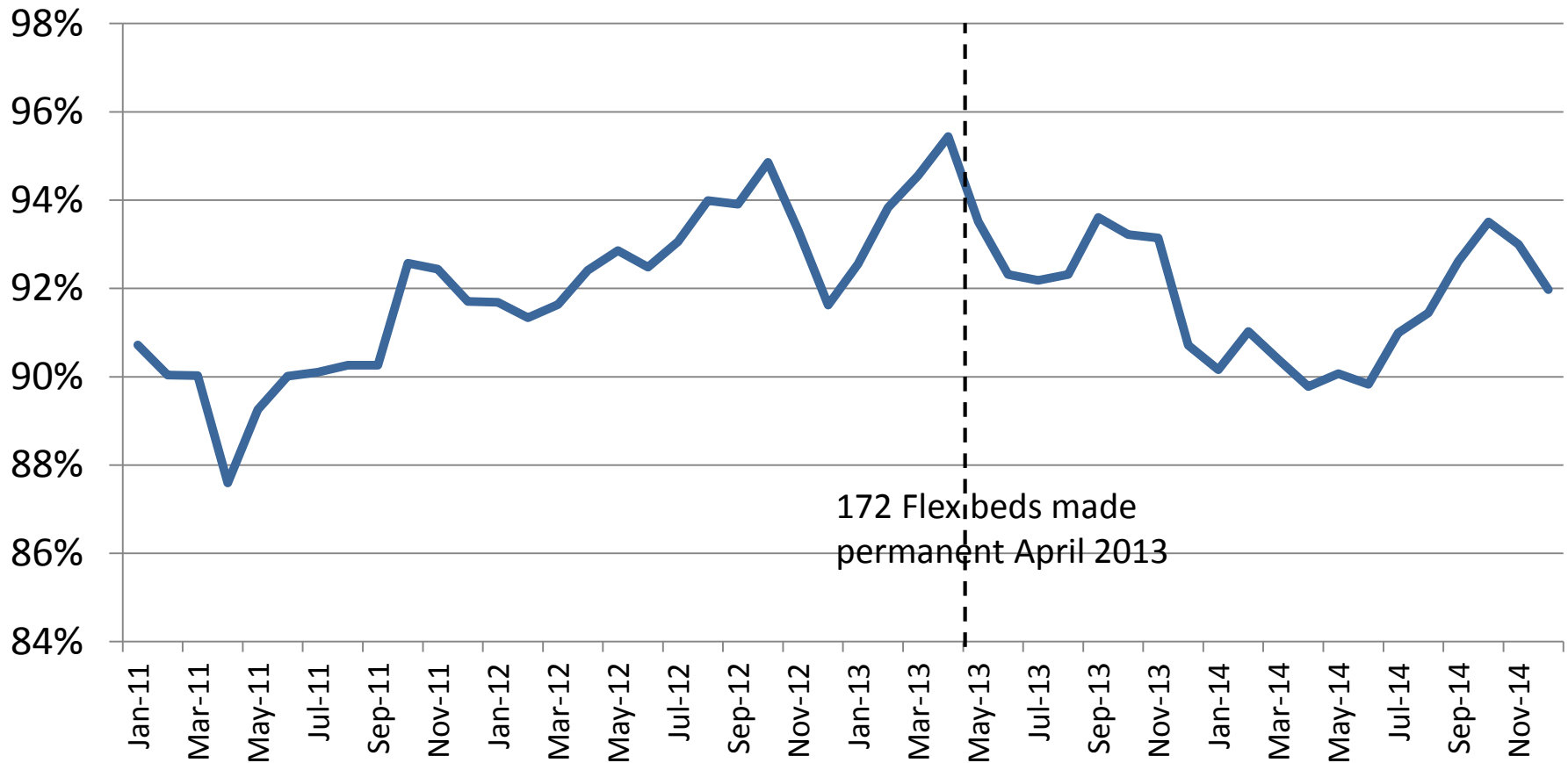
# Shelter use has been increasing

## Average Nightly Shelter Use 2011-2014



# Occupancy rate pressure

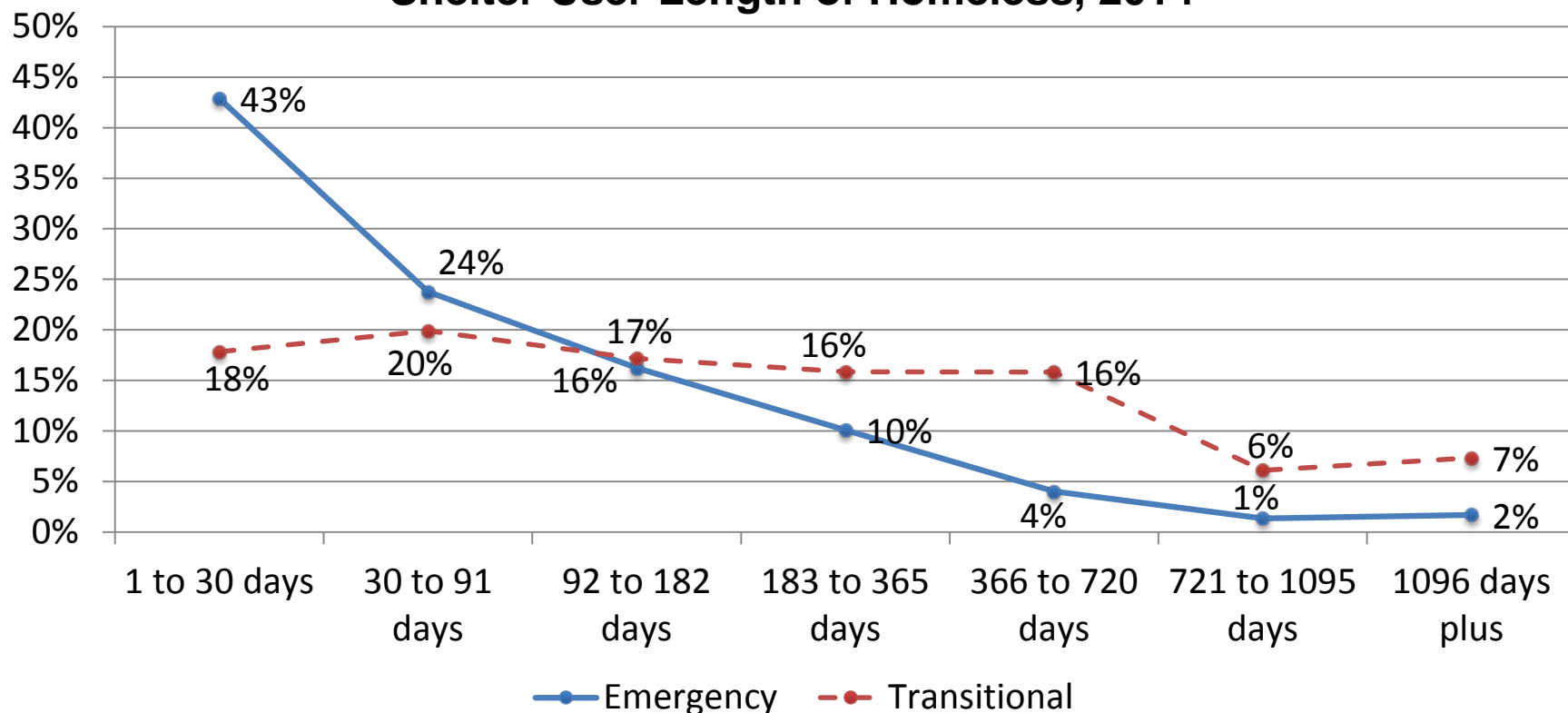
## Total Shelter System Occupancy Rate 2011-2014



# Length of shelter use

- Most people use the shelter system for a short time - half of all shelter users exited homelessness in 54 days or less

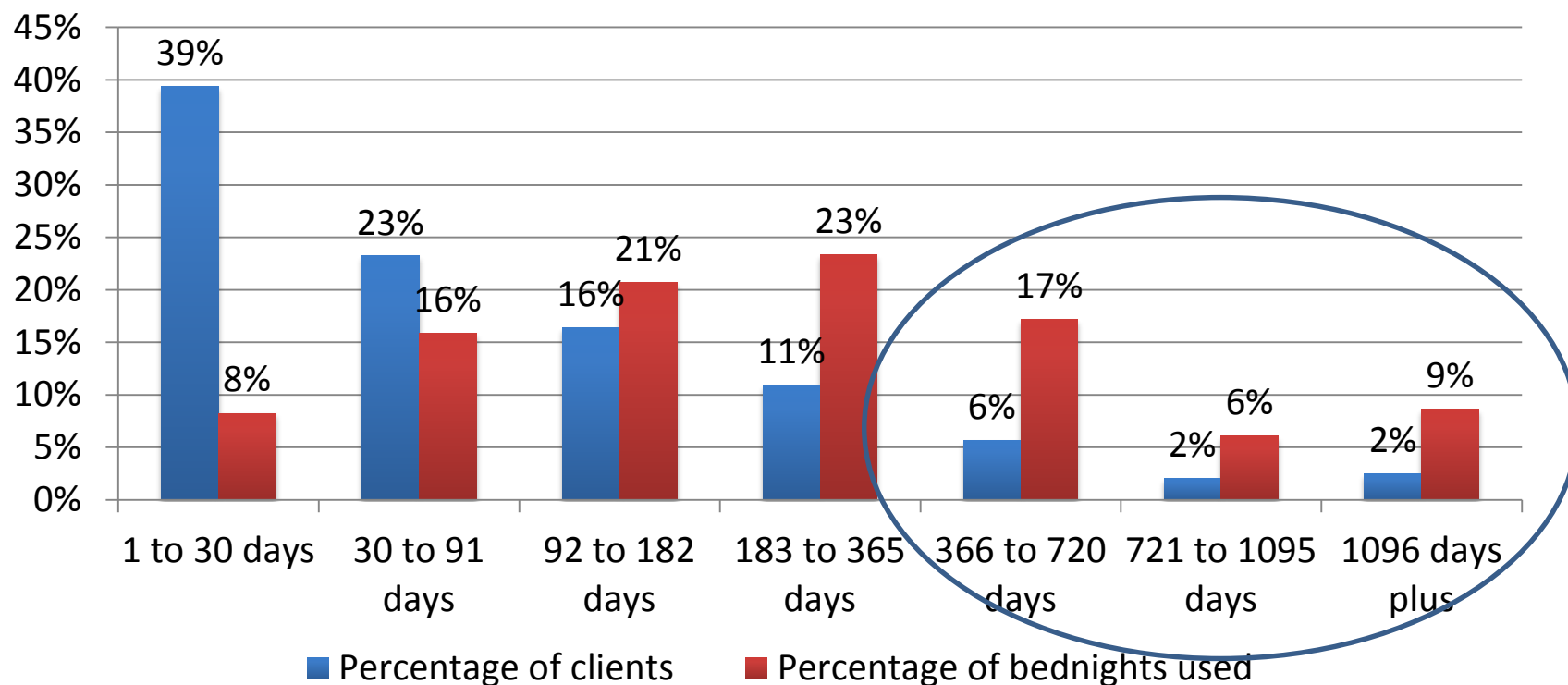
Shelter User Length of Homeless, 2014



# Long-term shelter users

- Ten percent of shelter users had been homeless for more than a year and used 32% of all shelter bednights available in 2014

Proportion of bednights by length of homelessness 2014





# Vision for the emergency shelter system

- Transformation of the emergency shelter system
  - move away from a system that is reactive and focused on temporary, emergency responses
  - Move to a shelter system where:
    - ✓ people can easily access a shelter bed appropriate to their needs
    - ✓ people are assisted to move back into permanent housing in a short period of time
    - ✓ services are responsive, flexible and focused on permanent, preventative solutions

# Need to address supply and demand

- Mix of strategies are proposed that address both the demand for emergency shelter and the available supply
  - 1) Manage supply
    - Add new capacity to the shelter system to respond to the immediate needs of people who are homeless and in crisis
  - 2) Reduce demand
    - Without also implementing strategies to ensure people are able to return to housing quickly, pressures on the emergency shelter system will only continue to increase

# Strategies to manage supply

- Total of 15 new shelter locations needed:
  - 3 for new capacity (funding in 2015 Budget)
  - 6 for relocation or replacement of existing shelters due to pressure created by real estate market and need to upgrade existing shelter facilities
  - 6 as a result of George Street Revitalization (4 permanent, 2 temporary)
- REOI in progress
- Search for appropriate shelter sites is underway in partnership with Real Estate Services

# Strategies to reduce demand

- Housing First pilot program that focuses on housing people who have been in shelter for more than one year
  - target 200 people over 12 months
  - free up shelter beds for their original emergency purpose
- Two approaches:
  - Internal: Coordinated Housing First team to provide intensive case management supports plus a housing allowance
  - External: Partner with LHINs; use housing allowances to leverage more intensive housing supports

# More efficient use of existing resources

- Initiatives underway to improve services and prevent people from become long-term shelter users:
  - updating the Shelter Standards;
  - reviewing use and function of transitional shelter programs;
  - developing enhanced centralized access system for emergency shelters;
  - developing strategic performance indicators and new funding model that creates incentives to support clients in moving to permanent housing;
  - integrated Mental Health and Addictions Strategy workplan.